

New wayfinding system for Oxford city centre

Oxford residents and visitors are encouraged to give their views on proposals for a new pedestrian wayfinding system for the city centre.

The proposed system will be one of the first in the UK to combine traditional fingerposts and mapping boards with state-of-the-art technology that allows you to access information using smart phones.

A consultation event is being held from 7 October to 7 November to enable people to give their views on the new system. Two prototype signs have been installed in Bonn Square and St Ebbes Street so that people can see the signs for themselves and give their feedback via a short questionnaire at www.oxford.gov.uk/wayfinding.

The project was launched eighteen months ago by the West End Partnership and the City and County Councils, with the aim of providing pedestrian signage that:

- Provides clear directional and map information to visitors
- Provides useful information for residents and encourages alternative routes
- Showcases a strong design which reflects Oxford's unique character and history
- Minimises street clutter by integrating directional information with maps, resulting in fewer signs
- Is durable, adaptable and affordable to maintain

Project leader Gordon Reid, who is also Oxford's City Centre Manager, said: "In researching the project we looked at wayfinding systems in other city centres.

The design solution we have developed draws on ideas from these cities but is bespoke to Oxford. Oxford is a city with a unique character and history; the new signage reflects these strengths and represents a forward-thinking city that is respectful of its heritage."

A family of sign types is being proposed, including wall-mounted maps and directional signs; fingerposts with an information panel; small and large map monoliths; and traditional fingerposts.

The concept and design for the new signage has been developed by the environmental design consultancy, Placemarque.

Design Director, Guy Warren, said: "The signs have been designed to be easily maintained and updated and will include design features, such as bronze posts, to complement Oxford's distinctive architecture.

The maps feature strong, simple graphics and for ease of use are in a "heads up" orientation, which means they are read in the direction in which you are looking. Consideration has been given to colour contrast, typeface and positioning to ensure the signs are accessible to as many people as possible."

Widespread consultation has already taken place with key stakeholders, including senior councillors, universities, local businesses, accessibility groups, and cultural and heritage organisations.

The project team now hopes to hear from as many visitors and residents as possible to ensure we get the best system for Oxford.

To have your say on the new wayfinding system, please visit the prototype signs in Bonn Square and St Ebbes Street then complete the short questionnaire at www.oxford.gov.uk/wayfinding.

You are also invited to attend one of the public drop-in sessions on 18 and 19 October in Bonn Square to share your views and ask any questions.

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